

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An apparatus for expanding a character string, which character string is entered to search includes a character string dividing device to divide the entered character string into partial character strings, a referencing device to reference a similarity table, the similarity table storing in advance similar partial character strings, each of similar partial character strings being derived from each of the partial character strings by changing at least one of the characters of each string to a different character which is similar in shape, and an expansion device to combine similar partial character strings into expanded words and store them in table.